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ABSTRACT

This study compared Australian teachers' attitudes toward multicultural education in 2000 with their attitudes in 1979, focusing on: fostering community language maintenance, fostering cultural identity and prestige maintenance, and fostering the benefits of multiculturalism within the community. Participating schools included: those which had been multicultural before the advent of official multicultural policy documents in the late 1970s and continued to be so over the study period; schools that were monocultural during the 20 years; and schools that were transitional during that period. About one-quarter of the teachers and administrators who completed the survey had a non-English-speaking background (NESB). Some improvement was seen in attitudes toward language maintenance since 1979. Though respondents believed students should maintain family languages, they generally felt this was not the school's responsibility. NESB respondents were more positive regarding language maintenance. There was only marginal change since 1979 on attitudes toward the school's role in cultural maintenance, with NESB respondents much more positive on this issue. There was no change in attitudes about the maintenance of community languages being good for Australia since 1979. Though a large proportion of respondents were negative about the issue, NESB respondents were more positive. (Contains 30 references.) (SM)

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Teacher attitudes to, and beliefs about, multicultural education: Have there been changes over the last twenty years?

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Australia, like a number of other growing nations, has opened itself up to waves of immigrants from the most diverse sources in the twentieth century. Successive Australian governments have maintained a reasonably high level of migrant intake stimulated by economic cultural, and humanitarian motives. The pattern of countries of origin of migrants has changed as global situations have altered. The influx of new citizens has greatly increased the cultural diversity within Australia. Prior to the 1970's the linguistic, religious and other aspects of cultural diversity meant little to mainstream schools in Australia, as students from many different backgrounds were expected to assimilate and conform to the dominant Anglo-Australian culture as represented in the schools they attended (McInerney, 1987a,b). The emergence of multiculturalism in the 1970's, stimulated by Federal Government initiatives, encouraged the retention and celebration of individual ethnic backgrounds. Influential in the development of

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multicultural policies within Australia, and in particular New South Wales, was the report written by the then Ethnic Affairs Commission entitled *Participation* (NSWGP, 1978).

The *Participation* report was unique, as it presented a different approach to multiculturalism. While other inquiries suggested that multiculturalism was a function of important but peripheral ethnic concerns, the Ethnic Affairs Commission saw it as a determinant in the framing of central policy (Murphy, 1993). The Commission's interpretation of multiculturalism was given in the opening words of the *Participation* report: "The Commission in this Report has attempted to look beyond the concept of multiculturalism seen only as a need to preserve the cultural heritage of Australians with a non-English speaking background. It sees as the fundamental issue the right of minority groups to achieve total participation in the Australian and New South Wales political and social systems." Culture is defined in *Participation* as central among that complex of personal and group attributes that includes gender and class. To what extent the emphases in *Participation* were followed, how they developed in the classroom practice, and which were the effects, are larger aspects to be considered in the larger study. In this paper we examine the effect of two of the Participation report priorities, that is, the fostering of programs to preserve community languages, and the fostering of programs to maintain ethnic cultural traditions and values within the broader community.

In 1987 an official national language policy was adopted (Lo Bianco, 1987) which was intended to give extra 'bite' to the community language aspect of multicultural policies. This *National Policy on Languages* sought to establish a framework for the teaching of languages of relevance to Australia and is based on four broad strategies: the conservation of Australia's language resources; the development and expansion of these language resources; the integration of Australian language teaching and language use efforts with national economic, social and cultural policies; and the provision of information and services in languages understood by clients (National Languages & Literacy Institute of Australia, 1993). While the importance of English as the national language was maintained, the position of ***community languages*** was strengthened on two fronts. First, native speakers of community languages received official support for their preservation through Australia's schools. Second, non-native speakers were encouraged to

learn a language other than English. To what extent these policies have effectively influenced school programs has not been closely examined.

Since the adoption of the *Participation* report as the blueprint for multicultural policy development and implementation in NSW in 1978 there has been a sustained stream of government funding dedicated to the cultivation of Australian minority groups' cultural heritage and to the achievement of Australian children of ethnic background in schools: community language teaching and support in schools, ESL programs, ethnic aides, bilingual programs, as well as multicultural curricula design for all schools. Research literature and reports are quite inconclusive on whether multiculturalism has ever impacted on mainstream schools, and, in particular, those which were and continued to be culturally homogenous. In this context this research reports on a study of teachers' understandings of, and commitment to, multicultural policies dealoing with community languages and cultural maintenance through schools and compares these with attitudes of teachers prior to the implementation of these policies.

Perspectives

Schools and multiculturalism

Whatever the educational, social and philosophical justifications for multiculturalism, there has also been a significant agenda influenced by other political considerations not related to the role education has to play in the development of multicultural societies which has affected the development of multiculturalism (Bullivant, 1986, 1988a,b; Castles, Kalantzis, Cope & Morrissey, 1988; Corson, 1993; Foster, 1988; Goodman, O'Hearn & Wallace-Crabbe, 1991; Irwin, 1989, 1991, 1992; Kalantzis & Cope, 1987, 1988; Kalantzis, Cope & Morrissey, 1988; Lo Bianco, 1990; McInerney, 1972, 1980a, 1980b,1987a, 1987b, 1987c; Partington & McCudden, 1990, 1992; Polesel, 1990; Poole, 1987; Smolicz, 1991). We will not deal with these issues in this paper but concentrate our focus on the roles of schools in implementing government education policy.

Schools have traditionally been seen as central agencies for implementing government social policy. Over the last twenty years, schools have been expected to play a major role in the acceptance and development of Federal Government multicultural policy under programs developed by State Education Departments (Kalantzis, Cope, Noble &

Poynting, 1990). Despite differences in interpretation, Australian schools have been required by law to provide equal educational opportunities for all students, irrespective of their backgrounds (Alcorso & Cope, 1986; Brentnall & Hodge, 1984; Office of Multicultural Affairs, 1990). The pathway 'from deliberate exclusion of individuals, to acknowledging the need for diversity, to ultimately valuing diversity' (DeSensi, 1995, p.39) has been one that demanded effort and commitment on behalf of all individuals involved. Many Australian teachers and schools appear to have given lukewarm reception to multicultural curriculum initiatives which have been perceived by some as unnecessary political social engineering (McInerney & McInerney, 1998).

In the immediate post-war period in Australia, when migrants and their children were expected to conform as soon as possible to Anglo-Australian customs, to adopt English as their language and eschewing any "ethnic" identity, to assimilate through intermarriage into the "Australian" --meaning Anglo-Australian-- way of life (Banchevska, 1966; Jupp, 1966; Martin, 1965, 1978; Price, 1963; Smolicz, 1971), schools were fairly monocultural institutions in terms of outlook, if not in terms of their population. During the 1960s immigrant groups began to lobby for a more tolerant attitude and, in particular, for support for children's maintenance of 'ethnic' languages and cultures in the schools serving their needs. Multicultural programs --some as simple as food fairs and costume days, others with more depth -- began to find favor too in the broader community around these schools. By the 1970s, the discussion had moved a considerable distance with governments and state education departments increasingly looking to the school to develop multicultural curricula in which cultural differences were not only respected but cultivated (Chipman, 1985; Davis, 1982; Harris, 1980; Martin, 1978; McNamara, 1979; New South Wales Department of Education, 1979, 1983; New South Wales Ethnic Affairs Commission, 1978; New South Wales Higher Education Board, 1984; Taft and Cahill, 1978). Community languages and cultures gradually became a normal part of many school programs and multiculturalism, supported by school systems, became more respectable and encouraged. Key policies written at the time, such as the NSW Department of Education Multicultural Policy Statement (1983), which followed an evaluation of the early 1979 policy statement and the 1983 support documents (Community Language Education, English as a Second Language Education;

Ethnic Studies, Intercultural Education, and Multicultural Perspectives to the Curriculum), while written to address the necessity of introducing appropriate curriculum to schools with high cultural diversity, were, however, intended for all schools.

By the late eighties and the nineties, despite claims that ethnic minority students had done well "in the educational race" (Birrell & Seitz 1986, Bullivant 1988) and counter claims that there were, in fact, disparities in the performance of ethnic background students (Gillborn & Gipps 1996), cultural and linguistic differences had begun to move from being perceived as a "problem" to being perceived as a "resource". Governments, both Federal and State, began to appreciate not only the human rights and equal opportunity aspects of the issue (N.S.W. EAC, 1996) but also links between immigration, social policy, and education on the one hand, and internationalization and the globalization of the economy on the other (N.S.W. DET, 1999).

In schools with large numbers of non English speaking background (NESB) students, school-based multicultural policies and practices were in place well before multiculturalism was an official policy, and have continued to flourish in such schools. In these schools need was the mother of invention. However, anecdotal information would suggest that the impact of multicultural education policies has been less than anticipated on schools where there does not appear to be any significant immigrant presence, despite the fact that many of the policies (particularly those related to Ethnic Studies, Intercultural Education, and Multicultural Perspectives to the Curriculum) are mandated for all schools. Many of the notions underpinning multicultural education (culture, ethnicity, equity, participation) appear somewhat vaguely defined in the policy documents (Poole, 1987; Sachs, 1989). Perhaps as a result of this, the attitudes of many teachers (and the community at large) has been, and still is, somewhat ambivalent to multiculturalism. This may explain the lack of impact of the policies.

McInerney (1979, 1987) conducted a study examining teacher attitudes towards multicultural curricula developments in a sample of New South Wales state primary schools prior to the publication and dissemination of the first state Multicultural Education Policy document in 1979. Specifically, he examined teacher attitudes towards language maintenance and the schools' role in this, as well as teacher attitudes towards cultural diversity and the schools' role in fostering cultural maintenance and diversity.

McInerney found that teachers and administrators were divided over issues related to these central elements of multicultural education. While there was general support for children of immigrants retaining their ethnic language and for including multicultural studies as part of the school curricula, there were quite ambivalent attitudes towards the retention of cultural traits by immigrants and their children for the social benefit of Australia. The school was not seen by many of the respondents as responsible for teaching or maintaining community languages, and there was only equivocal support for ethnic languages being used as a medium of instruction for part of the day in schools having large numbers of non-English-speaking children. The role of the school was seen primarily as one of teaching the non-English-speaking child English as quickly and painlessly as possible. A sizeable number of respondents (22%) considered that non-English-speaking children should not be encouraged to retain their ethnic language and that the maintenance of ethnic languages and customs was unimportant to the child (15% of respondents). Responses varied by school type (i.e., level of diversity) and teacher position (e.g., ESL teacher). In general, less positive attitudes were expressed in schools with low ethnic diversity than high ethnic diversity, and by classroom teachers than by ESL teachers. The level of commitment to multiculturalism across schools having little diversity was low.

Considerable resources have been applied to developing and disseminating multicultural programs across all schools over the last twenty years. The research literature and reports are quite inconclusive on whether multiculturalism has ever impacted on mainstream schools, and in particular those which were and continued to be culturally homogenous. As teachers and school administrators are responsible for implementing multicultural policies, it is important that they have knowledge of, and are positive towards, these policies. The purpose of this research is, therefore, to examine current teacher attitudes towards, and knowledge of, some key aspects of multicultural education, and to compare and contrast this with the knowledge and attitudes revealed prior to the implementation of the policies.

Method

Instruments

A quantitative survey consisting of fourteen questions was designed to replicate those used by McInerney (1979, 1987) and to assess teacher attitudes to multicultural education in 2000 in comparison with attitudes expressed in 1979. Items were written to reflect three key themes: fostering community language maintenance (sample item: "Non-English speaking background students should be encouraged by the school to retain their family language"; fostering the maintenance of cultural identity and prestige (sample item: "Schools should encourage the preservation of cultural differences between students of ethnic groups in Australia"; and fostering the benefits of multiculturalism in the broader community (sample item: "The maintenance of community languages is good for Australia"). Table 1 presents the full text of these questions. These 14 questions were answered on a four-point scale anchored with "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree". This format was a forced choice format with no middle point "unsure". While this format has some disadvantages with respondents, at times, indicating that they are unhappy to make an 'agree' or 'disagree' response (attitudes are not always this simple) it has the decided advantage of limiting the number of neutral responses. Furthermore, the response format replicated the forced choice format of the original questionnaire, although in this case the response was anchored with 'yes', and 'no'. In order to alleviate respondents' concerns about the forced choice format, and in order also to provide further depth to the answers, each question was followed by several empty lines and respondents were invited to elaborate on their answers. Although we only report on Part 1 of the survey in this paper, there were two further parts consisting of 12 and 18 questions respectively, which sought information on respondents' knowledge, beliefs and attitudes towards multicultural curricula and programs, and anti-racist education. The answers to these questions have also been qualitatively coded and categorised, as well as quantified in order to make a comparison with the earlier data. This extract from the full study (currently in progress) specifically reports on the first fourteen questions and their elaborations.

Table 1

Participation in Education Survey Questions

Question

1. The maintenance of the family language is important for the student.
2. Non-English speaking background students should be encouraged by the school to retain their family language.
3. It is the school's responsibility to help the students retain their family language
4. When there are large numbers of non-English speaking background students in a school, the school should play a significant role in teaching appropriate Community Languages.
5. It is desirable for Community Languages to be used as a medium of insturctin for part of the day in schools having large numbers of speakers of languages other than English.
6. Schools should encourage the preservation of cultural differences between students of ethnic groups in Australia.
7. A study of the cultures from which Australian migrants have come should be incorporated into the curriculum for all Australian students.
8. Students from English-speaking backgrounds should attend Community Language/culture classes at school to learn about the culture of ethnic groups.
9. Teachers should be familiar with the customs and languages of the students in their classroom.
10. Schools should encourage students to wear the clothes, eat the foods, or play games of their ethnic groups at school.
11. The maintenance of the languages of migrant groups is food for the social fabric of Australia.
12. The maintenance of the religions of migrant groups is food for the social fabric of Australia.
13. It is beneficial for migrant groups to live together in ethnic communities long-term.
14. The existence of informal ethnic groupings within schools hinders sstudents' integration into the school community.

In addition to the survey questions a limited number of demographic questions were included in order to do appropriate analyses. These questions asked for details on staff position, current grade level taught, number of years teaching, schools previously taught at and language background. Because of the nature of the questions asked we needed to be very sensitive not to obtain demographic information that may have been used to identify particular respondents.

Administration

The first author administered the survey to all staff at each school at a dedicated staff meeting at the end of the school day. This was done to ensure that all respondents understood the purpose of the survey, and to provide the opportunity for teachers to clarify questions. Prior to commencing the survey at each school the researcher gave a brief standardised introduction. The survey was also conducted at staff meetings to maximise return rates. This approach had a number of advantages and disadvantages. At all schools, bar one described below, cooperation was excellent and return rates maximised. Furthermore, many teachers seized on the opportunity to discuss issues with the researcher and each other. Many schools suggested that the data be used to run in-service courses at a later date. So no doubt the survey was perceived as useful and timely by the majority of schools. However, there were some logistic difficulties with this approach. First, it was extremely difficult to schedule a dedicated staff meeting at most schools with already committed meeting schedules, and second, even when the meeting was 'dedicated' much time was lost at some schools through administrative announcements, and the desire of teachers not to remain behind to complete the survey.

Participants

Our intention was to broadly sample three types of schools, viz, schools that had been multicultural prior to the advent of the official policy documents in the late 1970's and continued to be so over the twenty year period, schools that were monocultural and remained so over the twenty year period, and schools that were transitional during that period, that is, becoming multicultural from a monocultural origin. We also wished to survey primary and secondary schools as we imagined that the impact of the policy

would vary not only according to the level of multiculturalism at the school but also school type. The targeted population was all school administrators and teachers at each school. This was important as we wished to compare attitudes across levels of teacher experience, as well as perceived power within the schools.

Our plans were more difficult to implement than expected which sheds a little light on problems associated with studying the implementation of multicultural curriculum at all schools. While multicultural schools were very keen to participate, monocultural schools were less enthusiastic. In one particular large monocultural school, which was to provide an important part of our data, there was decided resistance to completing the survey, with almost the entire staff not complying, despite school administrative support and two visits by the research team to the school site. The reason given for the poor response was that such a survey was irrelevant to the school! We deal with this issue more in the description of the results. However, we were able to elicit the support of enough schools at this stage of the study to make meaningful comparisons with the earlier data. We are continuing to supplement the data with extra schools as the study proceeds. The participants in the study reported below are school administrators and teachers at:

- Two secondary and one primary school that were ethnically diverse prior to 1978 and continued to be ethnically diverse over the following twenty year period.
- Two primary and one secondary school that were culturally homogeneous (Anglo) prior to 1978 but which progressively became multi-ethnic over the period 1978-1998.
- One primary and three secondary schools that were culturally homogeneous prior to 1978 and remained homogeneous over the period 1978-1998.

A total of 345 teachers and administrators at these schools completed the survey (administrators = 58, teachers = 287, primary = 123, secondary = 222) with the response rate at most schools very good. Eighty-six teachers (25%) listed that they had a non-English speaking background. Approximately 35% of the teachers had taught 10 or less years, 32% from 11 to 20 years, and the remaining 33% had taught more than 20 years. The sample size was approximately half the sample size of the 1979 study.

Analyses

As the 1979 questions were in a forced choice "yes" /"no" format, the four point response format in this study was recoded "strongly agree" and "agree" to "yes", and "strongly disagree" and "disagree" to "no" to compute new variables. The table below presents percentages answering with either response to each question. However, in order to examine differences between schools and teacher type, the original four point response scale was used in parametric analyses. As indicated above the items on the survey were designed to reflect three key components of multicultural education, viz, language preservation, cultural maintenance, and multiculturalism and the broader community. MANOVA was conducted to examine group differences within these bands of questions to account for any capitalisation of chance owing to the relationship between questions within any one band. Comparisons were made between school type, level of multiculturalism, language background, position on staff and length of teaching service.

Results and Discussion

Table 2 presents findings across the schools surveyed and presents some interesting features in comparison to the 1979 data. Figure 1 represents graphically the responses of the full sample across all 14 questions.

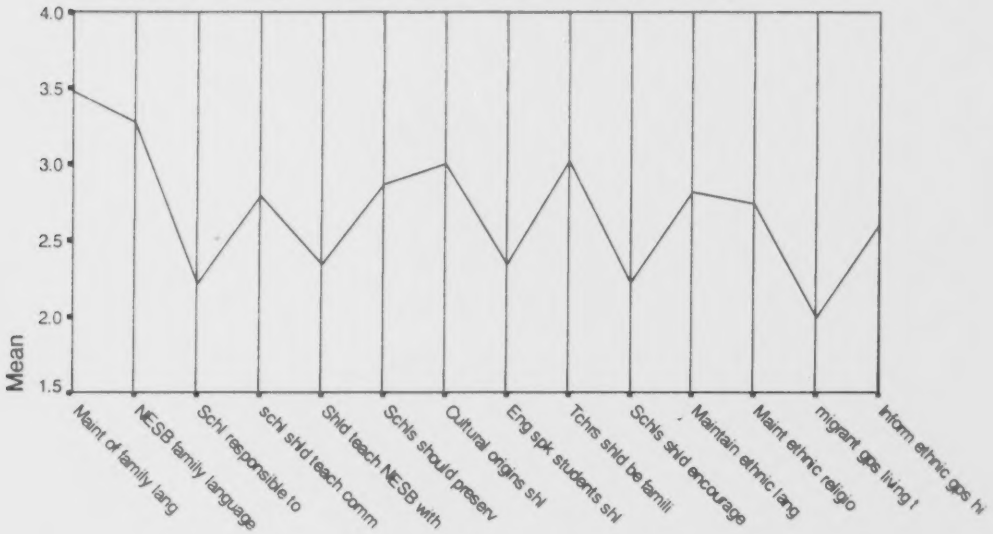
Table 2
Responses to multicultural questions (full text of questions in Table 1)

Question	Yes	No	nesb	type	mult
Language maintenance					
1. The maintenance of the family language is important for the student	97% (85%)a	3% (15%)i			
2. NESB students should be encouraged by the school to retain their language	91% (78%)	9% (22%)i			
3. It is the school's responsibility to help students retain their language	33% (24%)	67% (76%)i			
4. Schools should play significant role in teaching community languages	68% (36%)	32% (64%)i	*		*
5. It is desirable for community languages to be used for instruction	44% (49%)	56% (51%)i		*	
Cultural maintenance					
6. Schools should encourage the preservation of cultural differences	74% (50%)	26% (50%)i	*	(*)	
7. A study of other cultures should be part of the curriculum for all students	84% (91%)	16% (9%)d	*		
8. English speaking background students should attend culture and language classes to learn about ethnic groups	41% (52%)	59% (48%)d			
9. Teachers should be familiar with customs and languages of students	84% (89%)	16% (11%)d			
10. Schools should encourage students to wear the clothes,eat foods....	35% (28%)	65% (72%)i		(*)	
Broader community					
11. The maintenance of community languages is good for Australia	74% (73%)	26% (27%)s	*		
12. The maintenance of religions of immigrant groups is good for Australia	73% (-)	27% (-)			*
13. It is beneficial for immigrant groups to live together in ethnic communities	22% (11%)	78% (89%)i			*
14. The existence of ethnic groupings within school hinders integration	57% (76%)	43% (24%)i		*	*

Note: (a) number in bracket represents percentages answering question in 1979 study.
nesb = Non-English speaking background, type = school type (primary or high school), mult = level of multiculturalism (monocultural, multicultural, transitional)
i = increase in positive response, d = decrease in positive response, s = equivalent response
* Significant differences MANOVA. (*) Differences approaching significance
In the original questionnaire questions 11 & 12 were represented by one question "Is the maintenance of cultural traits by migrants good for the social community of Australia". We decided to use two questions in this survey to make the notion of cultural traits more explicit.

Figure 1

Comparison of means across 14 multicultural questions



The four point scale used for each of the 14 items in the survey was 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree and 4=strongly agree. A mean above 2.5 therefore records a positive response to the question, while a mean less than 2.5 records a negative response. Figure 1 reveals strong positive responses for questions 1, 2, and positive responses for questions 4, 6, 7, 9 and 11. There were negative responses to questions 3, 5, 8, 10 and 13 with the latter being the most negative. Question 14 is expressed negatively so responses to this question really indicate a negative attitude. In the next section we consider each of the questions in detail.

Language maintenance

In general, there has been an improvement in attitudes towards language maintenance since 1979. Across the five questions, there has been an improvement from 5% to 32% in positive responses. Very positive attitudes are expressed towards the importance of students' maintaining their family language (97%) and the role of the school in encouraging this (91%). Nevertheless, more negative attitudes are expressed towards the schools responsibility in this (only 33% indicating yes), the use of community languages for instruction (44% indicating yes), and the school playing a significant role in teaching community languages (68% indicating yes). The strongest improvement was with regard to this latter question with a 32% increase in positive responses since 1979. The weakest improvement was with regard to using community languages for instruction where there was an increase of only 5% in positive responses from the 1979 data.

There was a significant main effect on question 4 for language background ($F(5,414) = 3.49$, $p=.004$). Follow-up univariate F-tests indicated that non-English speaking background teachers ($M=2.99$) are significantly more in agreement that schools should play a significant role in teaching community languages than English speaking background teachers ($M=2.72$) ($F(1,318) = 6.98$, $p=.009$). There was a significant main effect for level of school multiculturalism on question 4 ($F(10,640) = 1.97$, $p=.035$). Follow-up oneway analyses indicated that transitional schools ($M=2.60$) are significantly less in agreement than monocultural ($M=2.83$) or multicultural ($M=2.87$) schools ($F(2,335)=3.55$, $p=.029$). There was a significant main effect for school type on question 5 ($F(5,320) = 5.77$, $p=.000$). Follow-up univariate F-tests indicate that primary schools are

significantly more positive to community languages being used for instruction (M=2.59) than high schools (M=2.21) ($F(1,324) = 18.00$, $p=.000$).

Across almost all questions NESB respondents were more positive, however the only significant difference was on question 4, i.e., "When there are large numbers of non-English speaking background students the school should play a significant role in teaching appropriate community languages." There was also a significant difference by level of multiculturalism with transitional schools being significantly less in agreement than either monocultural or multicultural schools. This could reflect the fact that multicultural schools already have programs in place, monocultural schools don't need to have such programs, while transitional schools are grappling, perhaps with limited resources, with the issue of introducing community languages. Across all language maintenance questions (except one, question 4) primary schools were more positive to each proposition than secondary schools. However, this difference was only significant on the one question: "It is desirable for Community Languages to be used as a medium of instruction for part of the day in schools having large numbers of speakers of languages other than English. The fact that primary schools were significantly more positive than high schools probably reflects the fact that it is, perhaps, less difficult to introduce community language programs within primary schools where students are housed within one home room, rather than in high schools with their more complex subject arrangements. It may also reflect primary teachers' greater as a result of more intensive training in multiculturalism within their degree courses

Perhaps the most striking feature of the findings on this bank of questions is that, although there has been improvement, there is still considerable ambivalence. Indeed, on two questions there is considerable negativity towards the role the school should play in language maintenance. Only 33% of respondents agreed that it is the school's responsibility to help students retain their language and only 44% agreed that it is desirable for community languages to be used for instruction in schools where there are large numbers of non-English speaking background students. In general, there were no differences by language background, type of school, or level of multiculturalism. Considering that community language programs have official backing and should be

mandated at appropriate schools some distance needs to be gone to obtain fuller teacher commitment to this aspect of multiculturalism.

Cultural maintenance

Across the five questions, reflecting attitudes to the schools' role in cultural maintenance there was marginal change from 1979 data. The strongest positive change was on question 6 with a 24% increase in positive attitudes towards schools encouraging the preservation of cultural differences. There was marginal improvement on question 10 with a 7% increase in positive responses to schools encouraging students to retain ethnic identity at school. Conversely, on three questions, 7, 8, and 9 there was a decrease in positive responses from the 1979 data. The emphasis in these questions was on what schools "should do" rather than what they "should encourage". On two questions (7 and 9) the response is still quite positive (84% from 91% and 89% respectively in 1979). However, on question 8, relating to English language background students attending culture and language classes to learn about ethnic groups, the response was quite negative with only 41% (down from 52% in 1979 data) agreeing with the proposition.

There was a significant main effect on this group of questions by language background ($F(5,306) = 2.80$, $p=.017$). Follow-up univariate F-tests revealed a significant difference for question 6 ($F(1,310) = 6.53$, $p=.011$) with NESB respondents ($M=3.05$) significantly more in agreement that schools should encourage the preservation of cultural differences than English language background respondents ($M=2.79$). Follow-up univariate F-tests also revealed a significant difference for question 7 ($F(1,310) = 5.44$, $p=.020$) with NESB respondents ($M=3.15$) significantly more in agreement that a study of other cultures should be a part of the curriculum for all students than English language background respondents ($M=2.95$).

The main effect for school type approached significance ($F(5,312) = 1.99$, $p=.08$). Follow-up univariate F-tests indicated that primary schools ($M=3.02$) are significantly more in agreement that schools should encourage the preservation of cultural differences than high schools ($M=2.78$) ($F(1,316) = 6.89$). Follow-up univariate tests also indicated that primary schools ($M=2.34$) are significantly more in agreement that schools should

encourage students to retain ethnic identity at school than high schools (M=2.16) ($F(1,316) = 4.71$, $p=.031$).

There are two striking features of these results. First, there has been a decrement in positive attitudes on key questions. This is concerning and perplexing given the fact that multiculturalism has been a mandated part of both pre and in-service teacher training courses over the last twenty years. Second, there are quite negative attitudes towards students from English-speaking backgrounds attending community language and culture classes at school to learn about the culture of ethnic groups (which seems innocuous enough), and towards schools encouraging students to wear the clothes, eat the foods, or play games of their ethnic groups at school. Both of these propositions are in line with the spirit of multiculturalism and the Participation Report. Even 26% of respondents are in disagreement with the proposition that schools should encourage the preservation of cultural differences. Across all questions NESB respondents are more positive to each proposition, although this was only significant for questions 6 and 7. Across all cultural maintenance questions primary schools were more positive than high schools, although there was only a significant difference on question 6. Again, as with the first bank of questions, this result might reflect the less complex nature of programming within primary schools, or perhaps their greater commitment as a result of more intensive training in multiculturalism within their degree courses. As with community language maintenance, the commitment of teachers to cultural maintenance across the full sample, and indeed within sub-samples, is less than envisioned within the multicultural policy document and the Participation Report.

Multiculturalism and the broader community

There was no change in attitude towards the maintenance of community languages being good for Australia since the 1979 data (74% of respondents in agreement with the proposition). Similar percentages apply to attitudes towards the maintenance of religions of immigrant groups being good for Australia (in the 1979 data these two aspects comprised one question). There was a slight increase in positive responses towards the proposition that it is beneficial for immigrant groups to live together in ethnic communities from the 1979 data (an increase from 11% to 22%), and a stronger increase in positive responses towards the proposition that the existence of ethnic groupings

within school hinders integration (up from 24% to 43%). Note this question is negative so disagreement signals a positive attitude towards the existence of ethnic groupings).

There was a significant main effect for language background on this bank of questions ($F(4,283) = 2.36$, $p=.053$). Follow-up univariate F-tests revealed a significant difference on question 11. Non-English background respondents ($M=2.96$) were significantly more positive to the proposition that the maintenance of the languages of migrant groups is good for the social fabric of Australia than English background respondents ($M=2.75$) ($F(1,286) = 8.59$, $p=.004$).

There was a significant main effect for school type ($F(4,289) = 3.94$, $p=.004$). Follow-up univariate F-tests revealed a significant difference on question 14 ($F(1,292) = 14.87$, $p=.000$). High school respondents ($M=2.73$) were significantly more in agreement that the existence of informal ethnic groupings within schools hinders students' integration into the school community than primary respondents ($M=2.38$).

There was a significant main effect for level of multiculturalism ($F(8,578) = 2.66$, $p=.007$). Follow-up univariate F-tests revealed a significant difference for question 12 ($F(2,291) = 4.11$, $p=.017$) with monocultural schools ($M=2.5$) significantly less positive to the proposition that the maintenance of the religions of migrant groups is good for the social fabric of Australia than either multicultural schools ($M=2.76$) and transitional schools ($M=2.88$). Follow-up univariate F-tests reveal a significant difference for question 13 ($F(2,291) = 3.04$), $p=.050$) with transitional schools ($M=2.18$) significantly more positive to the proposition that it is beneficial for migrant groups to live together in ethnic communities long-term than either multicultural schools ($M=1.95$) or monocultural schools ($M=1.90$). Finally, follow-up univariate F-tests revealed a significant difference for question 14 ($F(2,291) = 4.42$, $p=.013$) with both monocultural ($M=2.67$) and multicultural ($M=2.679$) agreeing more strongly with the proposition that the existence of informal ethnic groupings within schools hinders students' integration into the school community than transitional schools ($M=2.39$).

The most striking feature of these analyses is the relatively negative attitude of the respondents to each of the questions. Twenty five percent of the respondents do not agree that the maintenance of community languages and religions is good for Australia. This negative attitude rises to 78% for the proposition that it is beneficial for immigrant groups

to live together in ethnic communities for long periods of time. Fifty seven percent of the respondents believe that the existence of ethnic groupings within school hinders integration. Again, NESB respondents were more positive on each of the questions, although the differences were only statistically significant on question 11. Primary schools were also more positive on each proposition although the differences were only statistically significant on question 14. Type of school influenced attitudes on three of the four questions as elaborated above. Again the commitment to multiculturalism as reflected in these questions is less, perhaps, than envisioned in the multicultural policy documents and in the Participation Report.

We also conducted analyses by length of teaching service and position on staff (administrative or teaching). Length of teaching service was grouped in three streams – up to ten years, eleven to twenty years, and more than twenty years. Position on staff was broadly grouped into administrative and class teacher. There were no significant main effects for either grouping variable on any of the sets of questions. This was interesting as we had anticipated that teachers who had been in the service for more than twenty years would hold more negative attitudes than either of the other two groups who had been increasingly exposed to multicultural curricula within their teacher training courses. This result can be viewed positively, that is that older teachers have kept up to date with developments over the intervening years. Conversely, and probably more accurately, it can be viewed negatively, that is that even recently trained teachers hold no more positive attitudes towards multiculturalism in school contexts than teachers trained prior to the implementation of the policies. We had also anticipated that administrative staff, who are charged with implementing multicultural policies would be more positive than classroom teachers. Again, a result showing no difference in attitude is worrying and throws into relief that if the administrative staff are, at the best, ambivalent, and at the worst, negative towards multicultural initiatives, then what chance does the classroom teacher have.

Limitations in the study

A study such as this has inherent weaknesses. First among these is a sampling problem. We cannot constrain schools or individuals to cooperate and hence we cannot guarantee that the responses from our sample schools are not biased and truly reflect teacher

attitudes across the three broad categories of schools across the State of New South Wales, let alone Australia. Indeed, had we obtained usable data from one large anglo school that did not participate effectively the results may have been quite different, and perhaps a greater contrast drawn between monocultural, multicultural and transitional schools. The questions themselves were not necessarily the most appropriate but were written to reflect questions that were asked in the 1979 survey. We had to update the language of some of the questions as the way in which one talks about multiculturalism now is different from twenty years ago when 'political correctness' was less powerful. Within the sampled schools there were not enough English as a Second Language teachers to make a comparison group. In 1979, we were able to include such a group. The forced choice response format no doubt annoyed some respondents who said that a 'black' or 'white' answer was not possible. However, we alleviated this concern by allowing respondents to make open-ended responses to clarify their answers and these are detailed in another paper. Finally, our study reflects the attitudes of teachers at both primary and secondary schools. The 1979 study only sampled primary teachers. As we have seen in this survey primary teachers are generally more positive than secondary teachers across most questions and so the results comparing the two studies may be skewed and not as revealing of differences if the study had only used primary schools. This can be addressed by comparing the primary teachers in this sample with those of the earlier study, although the sample size for comparison is then reduced. We will conduct this analysis later.

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